

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
INFORMATION REPORT

COUNTRY USSR/Germany (Soviet Zone)

DATE DISTR. 16 Apr 52

SUBJECT Flame-Thrower Units in the Soviet Army

NO. OF PAGES 2

PLACE ACQUIRED

NO. OF ENCLS.
(LISTED BELOW)

DATE ACQUIRED

SUPPLEMENT TO
REPORT NO.

DATE OF INF

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REF ID: A7207A25

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1. Sometime in 1951, at the end of the winter training period, there was a CPX for the 57th Gds Rifle Division in which officers from divisional headquarters and all staff officers of subordinate units participated. The CPX was organized by HQ, 8th Gds Army in Weimar and was held in the Weissenfels region (5112N-1158E). At this exercise the tactical problem called for an "Attack of a Reinforced Infantry Regiment on a Fortified Enemy Position". The actual order for this attack, prepared by HQ, 8th Army, described the problem of the regiment as follows:The (?) regiment (I cannot remember regiment's designation) reinforced by [redacted]

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2. Since the abbreviated term ORShO was completely unknown to officers attending this CPX, [redacted] went to ask an explanation of the term from the Deputy Chief of Staff, Operations, 57th Gds Rifle Div, Col Puzanov. Colonel [redacted] was a graduate of the Frunze Academy, a brilliant officer and the right hand man of the division commander. He explained that the term ORShO was the official abbreviation

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for "Otdel'naya Rota Shantsevykh Ognemetov" (Separate Company of Trench Flame-throwers). Col. Puzanov refused to give [further information]

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3.

ORShO units were, in all probability, recently organized within the GORG and would be assigned to reinforced infantry regiments and higher level tactical units in case of war or emergency. For

[have I known of any operational order for a maneuver or a CPX which mentioned any imaginary, non-existing units. I therefore believe, that ORShO actually existed.]

4. Neither during nor after World War II, have I ever heard of any flame-thrower units in the Soviet Army. This is all the information I have on the subject.

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